

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4497

S E C R E T BONN 18894

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, GW

SUBJECT: EXPANSION OF GERMAN ARMS SALES ABROAD

REF: BONN 18699

1. STATE SECRETARY MANN IN THE FRG MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAS INFORMED US THAT THE WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT WAS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING EXPANSION OF ARMS SALES ABROAD.
2. MANN SAID THAT THE WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT WAS BEING DRIVEN IN THIS DIRECTION BY THE INCREASING NUMBER OF WEAPONS WHICH IT WAS PRODUCING IN COORDINATION WITH OTHER NATO STATES AS WELL AS BY ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED ELSEWHERE.
3. MANN SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR THE FRG TO CHANGE ITS ANNOUNCED POLICY RESTRICTING FOREIGN SALES. HE THOUGHT SALES COULD BE INCREASED THROUGH SHADINGS IN INTERPRETATION OF EXISTING POLICY. THEREFORE, THE FRG WOULD NOT EXPECT THIS TO BE A MAJOR ITEM OF DOMESTIC DEBATE AND WAS SOMEWHAT UNHAPPY ABOUT THE MANY PRESS STORIES SPECULATING ON PLANS FOR INCREASES IN ARMS SALES. HE DID NOT KNOW HOW THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE RECENT SPD CONVENTION DECISION AGAINST INCREASING ARMS SALES (REFTEL), BUT HE SAID HE COULD NOT SPEAK DEFINITELY TO THIS POINT

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BECAUSE HE HAD NOT YET SEEN THE PRECISE TEXT OF THE

SPD RESOLUTION.

4. MANN SAID THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT FOR THE FRG WOULD BE TO ACT ONLY IN CONSULTATION WITH ITS ALLIES AND, PRINCIPALLY, WITH THE UNITED STATES. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION WHETHER THE FRG WISHED BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL CONSULTATIONS, MANN REPLIED BILATERAL. HE SAID THAT THE CONSULTATIONS SHOULD NOT NECESSARILY FOCUS ON SUCH MATTERS AS DIVISION OF SALES AREAS' BUT SHOULD PRIMARILY ATTEMPT TO REACH MUTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS ON THE POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING SALES TO VARIOUS COUNTRIES AND REGIONS OF THE WORLD.

5. MANN STRESSED THAT THE GERMANS WERE NOT THINKING OF GOING INTO FOREIGN SALES IN A MAJOR WAY, BUT ONLY IN MODEST INCREMENTS.
HILLENBRAND

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